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2 June 1954

CRISIS IN EAST PAKISTAN

I. Current Situation

A. On 30 May Prime Minister Mohammed Ali announced dismissal of East Pakistan provincial government (identical with East Bengal) and institution of "governor's rule" there under tough, able Iskander Mirza, Pakistan's defense secretary.

B. "Governor's rule" means that until further notice province will be administered by Mirza appointed from Karachi, rather than by locally elected officials. East Pakistan legislature is theoretically untouched but now without power.

C. Troops patrolling principal cities of province, and widespread arrests, begun after jute mill riots at Narayanganj on 15 May, are continuing. Former East Pakistan cabinet head, 82 year old Fazlul Huq, is under house arrest, and at least four members his cabinet detained.

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D. Mohammed Ali says he intends to institute propaganda campaign and economic program to mitigate military rule.

II. Background

A. Mohammed Ali's 30 May announcement cited three factors leading to governor's rule:

1. Inability Huq government to maintain order, failure of local police and military to take action during 15 May riots, when several hundred people killed.
2. Evidence deliberate attempt outside forces--presumably Communist and Indian--to provoke disorder.
3. "Traitorous" attitude of Huq, as illustrated by NY Times interview saying his objective is independence for East Pakistan.

B. Mohammed Ali's case is strong, since Communist infiltration and agitation are certain, though Huq's "treason" may be senility.

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C. Karachi took decision reluctantly, apparently fearing political repercussions in East Pakistan, where Huq's United Front won overwhelming election victory over Moslem League last March.

III. Prospects

A. Decision in essence means Karachi will attempt to hold East Pakistan by force until situation cools. Central cabinet reported to believe this period may last a year--probably until nationwide elections, due for 1955.

1. Short term prospects favorable, since army is believed capable of keeping order.

2. Army strength in East Pakistan by early June estimated at 13,000.

B. Karachi's ability to hold East Pakistan is enhanced by removal of present three principal recognized leaders of United Front:

1. Fazlul Huq - 82 years old, unstable, now under house arrest. Symbol of East Pakistan's "liberation" from

Karachi last March.

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2. H. S. Suhrawardy - "national" leader, reported

seriously ill in Karachi and probably out of politics
for some time.

3. Maulana Bhashani - fellow traveling demagogue, now in
East Berlin after attending Communist Peace Congress
there. CIA reports he will be arrested on return to
Pakistan.

C. Elimination of these figures probably decapitates United
Front leadership - few if any second-liners known to be
available. Danger here is that outright and underground
Communists--of whom 24 are now reported in East Pakistan
legislature--will be residuary legatees of United Front
unless sweep of arrests is thorough.

D. Prospect locally is thus for temporary calm, followed

by gradually increasing agitation in coming months.

Intensity and tempo of this development depends on success
of Karachi's conciliatory program, which seems likely to
be fairly small.

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E. While there will be no major effect on Pakistan's attitude toward US aid or Western orientation, Karachi's preoccupation with East Pakistan problem is expected to preclude for some time its active participation in international problems--e.g., supervision of Indochina settlement or additional efforts at "northern tier" defense pacts.

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